decisions to revamp/modernise any plant are taken by the Company keeping in view commercial and technical viability of the project. However, Company has informed about a proposal to revamp the Roughing Mill at the Foil Plant of Bidhanbag Unit (BBU) as the first phase of modernisation of the Foil Plant, in consultation with M/s Dastur & Co., their consultant.

Manned and Unmanned Railway Crossings in Tamil Nadu

5308. SHRI K. PARASURAMAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of accidents occurred at the manned and unmanned railway crossings in Tamil Nadu during each of the last three years;

(b) the loss of life and property as a result thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent such accidents ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) Statistics regarding train accidents and related information are maintained Railway Zone-wise and not State-wise. Relevant information for Southern Railway is as under:-

	Manned Level Crossing Accidents			Unmanned Level Crossing Accidents		
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
No. of accidents	6	2	1	21	12	10
No. of persons killed	6	11	1	24	12	46
No. of persons injured	12	1	3	31	13	13
Cost of damage to Railway property (Rs. in lakhs)	0.96	-	-	0.16	1.31	3.18

(c) Some of the steps taken to prevent accidents at level crossings are as under :—

(1) Speed breakers/rumble strips have been provided on the aproaches to unmanned level crossings so that the road vehicles may reduce their speed.

(2) Whistle boards are also provided alongside the rail track on approach of level crossings to enable the train driver to whistle to warn the road users about the approaching train. Periodic drives are launched to check whether the drivers are whistling from such whistle boards.

(3) To educate the road drivers about safety at unmanned level crossings, publicity campaign is launched through various media like quickies on TV, cinema slides, posters, talks on radio and newspaper advertisements and street plays.

(4) Joint Ambush Checks with civil authorities to nab errant road vehicle drivers under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and the Railways Act, 1989.

(5) Telephones and gate signals have been provided at busy level crossing gates.

(6) Surprise checks are conducted to check alertness of gatemen.

(7) Since accidents at unmanned level crossings take place due to negligence of road users, the State Governments can help by exercising strict checks while issuing driving licences, specially to drivers of trucks, buses and other heavy vehicles. Road users have still not used to the faster speeds of Mail/Express trains. A train travelling at 90 kmph covers 25 m/sec. Thus, although to the road user, it appears to be 200 metres away, in terms of time, it is only 8 seconds away.

(8) Involvement of village Panchayats in their public awareness programmes.

Users Charge at Calicut Airport

5309. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount collected at Calicut Airport during 1996-97 by way of users charge;

(b) whether such a practice exists at any other Airport in the Country;

(c) whether any assurance was given to the passengers bound foreign countries by the authorities that such a practice would be abolished without further delay; and

(d) if so, the steps the Government have taken to do away with this practice?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) An amount of Rs. 6.42 crores has been collected during 1996-97 towards Users' Development Additional Fee at Calicut airport.

(b) to (d) No, Sir. However, the question of abolition of User Service Charge is under consideration.